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PP RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHPW
DE RUEHIL #2292 1421416
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 221416Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9290
INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 2439
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 0155
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU PRIORITY 0144
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4199
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1311
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2082
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7127
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 8318
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5656
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0989
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 4794
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3171
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6090
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2384
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0720
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2352
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 002292

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SUBJECT: TRUCKS DESTROYED IN ROCKET ATTACK AT TORKHAM BORDER

Classified By: A/DCM Cecile Shea, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) According to Mission contacts, at approximately 0400 local time Monday, May 21, unknown persons fired two Russian-made MRB-12 rockets at a group of fuel trucks bound for Coalition forces in Afghanistan. The trucks were parked in a lot near the Torkham border crossing, about 35 miles west of Peshawar. At least four of the trucks were destroyed, and the media reported another six trucks severely damaged. Local Frontier Corps soldiers confiscated three additional rockets of the same type from a nearby hilltop and detained eight Afghan refugees for questioning. (Note: At this time, authorities cannot verify that the eight detained refugees were associated with the rocket attack. End Note.)

¶2. (C) Oil tanker drivers tell us they often must spend days and even weeks parked on the Pakistan side of Torkham crossing while they wait for Afghan officials to process their customs and other documents. They report that the delays are a security issue, as multiple fuel trucks parked near each other provide targets of opportunity for miscreants and others. Several dozen truckers protested processing delays May 22, blocking the road leading to the border crossing for 30 minutes.

¶3. (C) The attack followed a May 7 fuel truck bombing in which nine trucks were destroyed in the Landikohtal area, about 6 miles from Torkham. Media reported the May 21 incident was part of a growing trend of attacks against fuel tankers traveling through the Northwest Frontier Province. Local contacts claimed that some of these recent attacks, however, were staged. According to these contacts and to press reports, some truckers have siphoned the fuel from their trucks and then set the vehicles on fire to cover up the theft; contacts report some truckers have also simply destroyed the trucks (without first siphoning fuel) and sought insurance money from their trucking companies. The involvement of rockets in Monday's attack, however, leads

observers and the press to believe the event was not staged.

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